

Experiment

by AniBlaire

Category: Animorphs

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2000-02-05 09:00:00

Updated: 2000-02-05 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 13:00:58

Rating: K

Chapters: 1

Words: 20,380

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Just trying to see if this works...

Experiment

Body pre

centerh3Great Temptations/center/h3

font="arial"

Blaire Ryan and Forlay

Concept of 'Warfare' series by Bob Elder

centerh3Prologue/center/h3

I crouched in the trenches. The rain ran off my helmet like a waterfall down granite. My vision was obscured slightly by it, but less than the water in my face would have if I had no helmet.

I felt the stinging pain in my leg. Some damn idiot, probably a newly appointed V.I.W., had used their skills to conjure up real guns and ammunition, something forbidden by law and common sense, to use in the battlefield. I began to wish that I had thought of the same thing before my source of powers had been lost. The 8-ball I had carried, and sparsely used until now, had been left behind when the enemy troops invaded our outermost fort. Now, all I had was my anti-fic bullets. Capable of rending a V.I.W., or any other author, with writers block for at least a week, depending on where you were shot.

It was my fault though. None of this would've happened, had I stuck to my side in the first place. If it wasn't for my being a traitor, our side would have taken the war, and the beautiful land known as Fanfiction.net wouldn't be such a wasteland. God, I'd still be one of Forlay's trusted lieutenants, not a lowly disgraced corporal that had no say in anything.

I had no time left to contemplate, though, when I was the red helmet of an enemy approaching stealthily to the east, and invading the trenches.

"They're in the trenches!" I screamed. Forlay ordered out the machine guns, and I took one gratefully. The enemy would not survive us, if I had anything to do with it.

I charged, firing the bullets in a spread that just barely missed my own allies. DeathGrip was doing the same. Bob was behind me, firing his shots with precision, not taking chances.

V.I.W.'s and regular writers alike were dropping like gnats in below freezing temperatures. I let out a barrage of fire and dove below a trench. I waited and looked out. Bob went down, then Deathgrip. I saw a showdown between Forlay, Rb, and D.M.P. I rooted as she took down her enemies. But then I saw the bullet hit her in the shoulder.

"NOOOOO!" I screamed, wanting to jump out of the trench and spray everyone within one-hundred feet with bullets. I stayed though. I could here several enemy soldiers approaching my trench, thinking they could ambush me. I would have to take my aggression out on them.

They began to take aim, and despite my gimp leg, I jumped into the air and began firing immediately. They still had shocked expressions on their faces as they disintegrated, being sent back home.

I looked around, and realized that I was all that was left. I was the only author or V.I.W. left at Fanfiction.net.

"Dammit!" I yelled and threw my weapon to the ground. I, who least deserved to survive, still lived, and all the other brave writers who had never given up, they were slaughtered.

I looked around and the black and barren landscape, devastated by the early stages of the war, where the writers were using real bombs, before realizing that anyone with a half decent 8-ball could heal themselves and bring others back to life.

Well, if he could find an 8-ball, maybe he could at least start by making Fanfiction.net beautiful again.

centeriFive Months Earlier/i/center

centerh3Chapter I/center/h3

Aniblaire walked down the streets of downtown Animorphs, the capitol of Fanfiction.net, feeling pretty damn good about himself. His latest finished work, "The Reeducation of Rachel", was now playing at Top 20's theater, the most prestigious of grounds in the entire world. It would probably only remain there for two weeks or so, but that was the best an author could expect. Not many were blessed with such a good spot. A single rating of below ten could strip it out immediately.

He wasn't worried about that though. He was a prestigious author in many circles, but the fact was he had not finished hardly anything.

Until that, he could count on one hand how many stories he'd submitted, and except one or two, they weren't very good. But now, now he had something with substance, that was actually a pretty cool idea.

He was proud, to say the least.

As he walked into the diner, her thought about what he was seeing around him. Unless there was a convergence of writers that planned the scenery, you could pretty much see Fanfiction.net as anything you wanted to, but he chose the setting most popular by the residents. It was 1930's, downtown New York, and had fabulous restaurants. Of course, ninety percent of the patrons were holograms generated by the server's massive thinktank, but they were good conversation.

Besides, there weren't that many guys at Animorphs anyway, 90% of the writers were women. He had nothing against chatting with women, but his . . . interest, might object. He knew she wouldn't be happy if he was picking up women.

He sat down at his favorite seat, on the top floor of the restaurant. It was overlooking the lake and green-purple rolling hills. He loved this spot, it was where he first wrote up the draft of Misery, a close second in his list of favorites, that he'd written, his favorite being the romance hit, Days After. Though Misery wasn't a big hit, because of gory content, it was a great story, in which he was thinking of rewriting, hopefully this time to do better in the ratings.

He waited only a few minutes, and his lunch appointment appeared. She, like him, had chosen her casual persona as a model. Most people used their model images unless their was serious business, that required their real faces. Though that was only in emergencies, where you dared show your real face to the people around you. That had only happened once so far on a large scale. Their had been several isolated incidents where Very Important Writers had used their "8-ball" abilities, as they called them (the power source was round, black, and had a white circle in the center), to bring a bunch of other writers together to harass characters. It often happened when there was a lack of serious fanfic vids floating around. Even the most reserved writers sometimes went overboard.

So, he only saw her chosen face, it was a blending of Yasmine Bleeth and Cindy Crawford, with amazing subtlety in mixing of the features. Aniblaire's was not chosen by him, but for lack of creativity in the self-image department, he had the think tank design something from dozens of famous athletes and movie stars. He didn't really look in the mirror often, and didn't know exactly what he looked like.

She sat down, and he watched as her shoes changed every few seconds. One second there were black shoes, the next red shoes. One moment blue, the next green. It was almost comical, but the shoes always fit with the outfit and the wearer, so he didn't complain.

"Hey Forlay," he said handing her a menu.

She picked up the menu, glancing over the daily specials, "Hey Blaire. You can call me Angela once in a while if you want, I call you Blaire, not Aniblaire," she said still looking at the menu. She

chose something and set it down.

"Yes, but Blaire may not be my real name," he said smiling. "Then again, Clay may not be it either."

"Touchâ€š."

He finally selected something, and summoned the nearest waiter. The holograms weren't known for their helpfulness, that was unless you summoned them, then

they would do magic.

They both ordered, sat, and talked. They were unaware that someone was watching them.

"They do look like such a cute couple . . . " she said, and laughed hysterically.

centerh3Chapter II/center/h3

It was not a good time.

Fanfiction.net was not a happy place to be at the moment, there was nothing but tension floating around in the air. Those who were once the best of friends were now hardly able to be around eachother, and those who were uneasy allies, were unyielding enemies.

It all started when the self-insertions started. Using their omnipotent writer abilities writers had began summoning characters into Fanfiction.net's domain, where they brought themselves, and often other writers into insane plots that usually ended with massive stupidity. Often, it ended in disagreement between authors, but never as much as recently.

When Delusional Manic-depressive Psychopath, D.M.P., had created what she called, "Pure Insanity", she had started something she could have never imagined. By watching Aniblaire and Forlay's lunch a month two weeks before, she had decided that they were a "cute couple", ellipses rampant. Soon after, Rb had followed suit, when she did her self-insertion.

That was the last straw for Forlay, and against good judgment, she had exacted revenge upon Rb and D.M.P., causing them to lose their ability to come to Fanfiction.net, or write anything for that matter for a short time.

The community had watched in apprehension, as they waited for D.M.P. and Rb to make the next move. Everyone expected a huge prank on Forlay, something that she would get revenge upon, and that would start the cycle over, or get them both to realize how stupid the argument really was. Those who knew D.M.P. and Rb though, could never expect what she really did.

The problem with the matter started with the fact that D.M.P. had saved everyone from becoming townies, or at least tried, and people took a liking to that. They said that she was looking out for the fanfiction community's interest, while others believed it was all set up by D.M.P. herself. That was a large part of the argument, did D.M.P. set it up so she could do what she did with Forlay? No one

knew for sure.

Though one thing was for sure, she did do what she did to Forlay. After capturing her, and dragging her around the Fanfiction.net server's farthest reaches, forcing her to watch as she did unspeakably dumb things to the characters from Animorphs, and then dropped her off in the seedier part of the world, the X-files XXX theaters, mostly featuring slash vids about Mulder and Skinner.

As Aniblaire sat with Bob and Mousie, they discussed, and debated, what Forlay was going to do when she got back. Forlay's plane would be arriving within the next ten minutes, having gone two category division lines, or continents, she would probably be tired and irritable, and Bob guessed she would declare a counter-strike against D.M.P., while Blaire and Mousie thought she would just want to unplug and take a shower back home.

"Look, you guys, there are dozens of writers siding with D.M.P., declaring that Forlay had abused her power, you guys know, you've seen the updates every hour, and I'm sure Angela has to. She is not going to back down on this, Forlay's persona may be super friggin air-headed models, but Angela is not," Bob said with conviction.

"Bob, that would cause an all out riot. Just as many people are on her side, saying that D.M.P. set up that whole brainwashing scheme, they would practically go to war for her. She's the most respected V.I.W. here, her words could cause chaos. She knows that, and is smart enough not to do anything rash," Mousie said, hoping what she said was true.

"I'm hoping what your saying is true, Mousie. I don't want to agree with you Bob, but Forlay has been pushed, and pushed over the last week, not to mention the humiliation she suffered before-

"Which wouldn't have happened had you not been shagging her!" Bob cut in.

Blaire got the same angry look on his face he did every time someone accused him of sleeping with Forlay, "Bob, I. Did. Not. Sleep. With. Forlay! Why can't people accept that! We never even considered being a couple!" And the same, disbelieving expression appeared on both his and Mousie's face.

"Yeah-" Bob started, but was unable to finish when someone ran up the stairs of the restaurant yelling.

"Forlay's plane is landing!" and then ran back down the stairs.

Mousie stood up, "I'd like to sit with you gentlemen longer, and continue this lovely conversation, but I really want to see what is going to happen. It'll be good for my column," she picked up her 8-ball from her leg and the body that she wore, the true Mousie, disappeared as the image of several models blended took it's place.

Bob and Blaire were already in their false images. Unlike Mousie and many other writers, they had no problem with spending long amounts of time in their untrue forms. Luckily for Mousie, she had her 8-ball,

unlike many of the form phobes, as they were called, who had to log into the database every time they changed.

The 8-ball acted as a direct link into the server's database, giving the user nearly omnipotent powers in the Fanfiction.net realm. With an 8-ball, you had a psychic link to the simulation of Fanfiction.net's reality, where everyone resided. At home, their bodies were jacked into the reality by a cortical scanner built into their monitors, it stayed there and held the mind to the body. So, with an 8-ball, an author could change the principles of reality itself. Unfortunately, too many authors were using them without rules. It was speculated that if too many authors started changing the basic principles of reality, then the 8-ball powers would cease to work other than places with gravimetric disturbances, commonly called "plot holes".

"Well, we'd better get going," Bob said standing up and plopping several dollars on the table for his cake, pudding, and tea.

Blaire did the same, and they headed out the door, discussing the repercussions still if Forlay acted rash.

center~ ~ ~/center

Blaire and Bob stood watching as the plane settled to a finish. The door opened, and Forlay stepped out.

Forlay stepped off the plane, her face set in a scowl. Yes, there was a huge crowd of people at the airport for the sole purpose of welcoming her back to the world of Animorphs writing. But what she'd seen the last week was enough to harden even the most cordial writer. Even when she saw some of her closest friends there to greet her, she couldn't muster more than a slight upturning of the corners of her mouth.

"Forlay!" some people, holding notebooks and laptops were calling. Forlay recognized them as her fellow columnists. "Forlay, can I interview you?" She shook her head tersely and proceeded through the crowd.

"Hey, Forlay, wait up!" a voice behind the V.I.W. called. She recognized the voice and turned around, "Hey, Bob. Blaire," she added when she saw another friend jogging up to her with Bob.

"What's up?" Bob asked her casually.

"What's up?" Forlay repeated. "What's up is I am extremely ticked off. Get me a computer. I have some serious writing to do."

"Whoa, whoa, hold up!" Blaire told her. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, that what D.M.P. did to me was inexcusable. She has to pay."

"Forlay, do you realize how many people you have behind you? If you do anything rash . . . "

"Blaire, I'm not in the mood to be nice. I don't care how many people I have behind me, whatever that means. I'll do whatever I darn well please."

"Blair's right, Forlay," Bob said, trying to keep his friend away from the bank of computer terminals the airport had open. "If you do something crazy, which we all know you're perfectly capable of doing, you will start a full fledged war between authors. Which no one wants. Right?"

"Whatever," Forlay pushed past Bob and sat herself down in front of a computer. Her image wavered slightly, changing from Yasmine Bleeth and Cindy Crawford, to an image closer to looking like Xena, in an army general's uniform. "Might as well look the part," she said to herself as she opened the word processing program. Bob and Blair stood behind her, probably hoping to stop her from doing something crazy, although they both knew that if the crazed author was bent on doing something, nothing they did could possibly stop her. "Now, what to write?"

center~ ~ ~ /center

Before long, the group of people that had gathered to welcome Forlay back had dwindled down to just the people who knew her well, or the stubborn columnists who still wanted a review, and they had crowded around the computer terminal, watching Forlay's fingers fly across the keyboard, and her angry words spread across the screen. In a record amount of time, for her, anyways, Forlay had finished the story and had submitted it. She stood up from the computer, stretched, and allowed her image to shimmer back to her usual one. She smiled at her audience. "Now I'm ready for a welcome back gathering. What have I missed?"

center~ ~ ~ /center

Forlay strolled down the main street of Animorphs, glad to finally be back home. She'd missed the look of Animorphs decked out to be 1920's Chicago. Unlike most of the other residents, she wasn't all that fond of 1940's New York. New York's a great place and all, but nothing could beat Chicago in the roaring twenties.

She walked past the discussion forum, wondering what conversations she'd missed during her 'trip', and was surprised to see the number of messages there. She rarely visited the forum, but when she had, she'd never seen this many messages.

Apparently, the entire Animorphs community had split while she'd been away. Half siding with D.M.P., saying she was the victim of Forlay's ruthlessness, the other half siding with Forlay herself, saying D.M.P. had set up all the hardships they'd had lately, including the infamous townie business. Forlay shuddered at the memory of how close she'd come to being hit with that and continued reading.

"War?!" she exclaimed out loud when she saw someone suggesting that a war would be needed to clear this up. Yes, she was angry, and yes, D.M.P. needed to pay for what she had done, but wasn't a war going a bit too far?

Evidentially not. Other people had suggested that, too. Some even going so far as to declare who's side they'd be on "when the war began." Not "if the war began", when.

"Oh, boy," Forlay said under her breath. She left the forum

immediately and jogged off to find someone to talk to. Someone who could hopefully get the world out of the terrible mess they'd set themselves up for.

center~ ~ ~/center

Blaire sat in the quiet recesses of Animorphs, his usual coffee shop now swamped with F.F.U. members, Forlay's Followers United, planning exactly what they were going to do "when" the war started. He laughed when they asked him for suggestions, wanting him to teach self-defense techniques he'd learned back before he was a writer. This new place, "The Caffeine Addicts United", or CAU, had very few, very loyal customers. Considering he no longer drank anything with caffeine in it, it was a dumb place to be, but he liked the scent of fresh coffee. That, and he was hooked on biscuits served in the 1920's coffee shops.

When he was staring off into space, considering why he hadn't been able to write a finished story in months, he heard someone burst into the door. People looked up, as did he, to see Forlay bursting into the door, her supermodel form replaced by an Olympic runner. She walked straight towards his table and sat down, looking completely upset.

She was her model self again, but still looked ready to bite someone's head off. "I am going to kill her! I seriously am!" She yelled, taking a small palm top computer out of her pocket.

"What is it Angela?" He asked, for some reason referring to her by something different than the usual Forlay.

She shoved the palm top towards him, and he took it. "Look at the most recent post at the discussion forum!"

He began to read,

iTo all those opposed to the injustices of "Queen Forlay" here at fanfiction.net, I call to you to do something about it./i

preI can understand a little prank, a little stupid trick, but Forlay has gone to far. I awoke yesterday morning to find my computer disassembled, my connection taken apart by the seems. I am being forced to jack in by a friends computer with a mere 14.4 connection! How dare she? I call all of those on my side, to rise up against the evil known as Forlay. I CALL YOU ALL!/pre

Blaire looked up in shock. D.M.P. had gone too far this time, he knew it would set Forlay off. He also knew that Forlay had not done what the Psychopath had claimed. Probably an overzealous follower of the "Forlay Movement".

Forlay looked at him with fury. "This means war!"

"War?" Blaire repeated, not quite believing what his friend had said. "No, no, Forlay. War's not the answer here."

"Oh, and what is?" Forlay replied, "Talking? I was willing to talk after 'Ellipses'. Heck, I was willing to drop the whole thing after that! Their block didn't even last a day. It was harmless. Dragging me through the XXX theaters wasn't harmless, so I come back with a

slightly less harmless fic than Ellipses. Now she's accusing me totally destroying her computer, a fate I wouldn't wish on anyone, so this is our only option left." A few people, part of the F.F.U., cheered at her statement. Already, their personas were shimmering into combat uniforms, purposefully taking on Forlay's two favorite colors, teal and black.

"Forlay, I think you're seriously over reacting," Blaire said in a final attempt at reason.

"I don't. I'm gonna go see if I can find some of my own recruits for this little skirmish. You with me?"

Blaire sighed. "Sure, why not."

"Great," Forlay said, allowing her own persona to shimmer into a form similar to the one she'd assumed at the airport, except this one was wearing the uniform her troops had designed for her, and she had a single starred helmet under her arm. "Come on, troops!" she called to the F.F.U.'s gathered in the CAU in her most authoritative tone. "Let's move out!"

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay led her entourage down main street, looking for anyone who would join her cause. Block by block, people saw the uniformed group, quickly got the idea of what was going on, and either hurried to join them, or walked in the opposite direction quickly, either wanting to get away from a prospective fight, or to join the enemy's side.

As the impromptu army continued, they met more and more people in different uniforms, these ones green and purple. Forlay assumed that was the coloring D.M.P. had chosen for her own army.

Forlay was just ready to give up searching for more supporters, as everybody was already in the other uniform, when she saw one last person in regular clothing.

"Bob!" she shouted, waving him down.

"Hey . . . Forlay? What's this the outfit?" he asked.

"It's war," Forlay told him. "We've officially got war on our hands. D.M.P.'s got her own troops, those'd be the ones in the purple and green. And I've got my own army right here," she waved her hand back to indicate the uniformed authors behind her. "You with us? We're gonna need every hand we can get."

I was afraid it'd lead to this, Bob thought to himself. Out loud he said, "Sure. Where do I sign up?"

Forlay smiled, "Just put on a uniform and follow me. I don't think we're going to find any other available people, so we might as well find a place to set up camp."

"Ma'am, yes ma'am!" Bob said, saluting her mockingly. Forlay gave him an equally mocking glare before laughing and signaling for her troops to keep moving forward.

center~ ~ ~/center

The entire time, Blaire was shuddering inside. He liked a gory, violent story just as much as the next writer, but this was real! Well, it wasn't real in the most real sense of reality, but it was real to all of the authors, it was real to the residents of Fanfiction.net who had no idea their world was a sham. They couldn't go to war, they just couldn't.

center~ ~ ~/center

When camp was set up and ready, a mile outside of Animorphs, in the Books Category Forest, Blaire sat down and ate in a haze of quiet solitude. He'd gone as far away from camp as he could, into the trees, to get away from what was happening. It just made him sick to think of what was going to happen.

"I know someone who doesn't agree with what's happening," a mocking, childish taunt sounded where Blaire was sitting. He recognized the voice, he had known the owner for quite some time, been one of the biggest promoters of one of her fics at a point, but now, she was the enemy.

"Don't hide from me Arbee," he said annoyed, "I could just make you appear anyway."

RB appeared out of the server's astral plane, and sat down on a log across from Blaire. She looked at him eating alone, on a stump a mile from his base, and laughed.

"Please, I'm dying to know, what is the point of this little meeting?" Blaire said, his voice dripping with sarcasm.

She shook her head, she was in a trickster's mood, "No, no, can nay be the Blaire I remember, sitting in the forest, all alone, eating in solitude, and actually liking it more than eating with people! What has happened to you?"

Blaire laughed lightly, "It is obvious you've never met me IRL, outside of this place or #Animorphs Chat City, because then you'd know something crucial about me: I love solitude," he took another bite of the potatoes he'd been playing with before RB had arrived, "though, please tell me what has happened to me, I don't know if I'll be able to live until you tell me."

Cynical bastard, she thought, "No, no. What you are like in real life has no pertinence on what you are like hear. You were once a proud, fun writer, who got things done, and didn't have more than twenty-four different stories to write.

"It's all her fault, you know it. Before you met our queenie, you were popping out fics left and right, had all us friends in the #Animorphs to fall back on. Now what, you spend all your time I-seeking your "friends" in those holes you call coffee shops. You don't even drink coffee!" the last of what RB was saying was true, he hadn't talked to other friends, but a part of Blaire knew she was wrong, it wasn't even about Forlay, but how he himself had changed because of him, not her. Unfortunately, that part wasn't in control of his brain at the moment.

"I'm listening."

Looking satisfied, RB began, "I know you don't want the war, I know that you are a pacifist at heart, so I want to offer you a way to end it before it begins," she said, a self-satisfied smirk plastering itself on her face.

"What, I'm not going to hurt Angela, no way no how," Blaire said defiantly.

RB shook her head, "No, no! You won't have to hurt her at all. Just bring her, and her top officers to this address," a three-by-five card appeared in front of Blaire and he grabbed it. Rb had become powerful since receiving V.I.W. abilities, too powerful. "Go there, and there'll be a peaceful solution to all this."

RB disappeared, as Blaire stared at the card. Betray Forlay? How could he do that? Though . . . it would end the fighting, and it was peaceful . . .

With his mind made up, Blaire began walking back to camp.

center~ ~ ~/center

Standing in the shadows, two figures stood.

"Did he take the bait?"

"Yes, he'll bring her, and the rest of them to the factory."

"Will the bomb be ready?"

"Yes, they'll be home for weeks."

The figures laughed and walked deeper into the woods.

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay looked around the camp impatiently. She'd given the troops an hour break after setting up camp to eat and rest before an afternoon of training, but Blaire, the person she expected least to be tardy, hadn't arrived yet, and they were already ten minutes late!

Forlay, chill, girl! she told herself. It's ten minutes! It's not like you to get this worked up, you've been late before, too, so you can just calm down. Nobody else is complaining at the delay, so neither should you.

She allowed herself to relax. A little. Until she saw Blaire's silhouette coming towards the camp from the woods, then she was back in her military commander mode. "Took you long enough!" she said to him when he was close enough to talk conversationally with. He was one of the CO-commanding officers in this army, along with Bob and herself, and the troops couldn't see him getting chewed out before training had even begun.

"Sorry," he apologized. "But I was thinking . . . "

"There's a dangerous pastime for ya'," Forlay joked.

"Hah hah. Seriously, I was thinking, and I believe I've come up with

a way we can solve this. Peacefully."

Forlay cocked an eyebrow. "Really? Well, being the pacifist I am, I'm willing to listen. Won't guarantee that I'll follow through with it, but I'll listen."

"I think that if we can get the leaders of both the armies together, on neutral ground, we can sort things out and make it clear that all this was just a big misunderstanding."

"And how am I supposed to trust that D.M.P. would show up, and if she did that she wouldn't blow me to pieces?"

"Well . . . I sort of met one of her officers in the woods . . . "

"WHAT?!"

"It was planned, I swear. I was out there, minding my own business, when Rb . . . "

"Whom I wouldn't trust as far as I could throw," Forlay interjected. "She made a nasty little comment, too."

"With commas," Blaire pointed out.

"You taking her side?"

"No, just making a point. May I continue?" he was getting slightly exasperated with Forlay. She was taking this a bit too seriously for his liking.

"Go ahead."

"Rb came up to me and made a . . . suggestion. The leaders should get together here," he handed Forlay the card, "And we can talk. Rb promised we'd talk peacefully." Not quite true, but anything to get this war over with before it began.

"Are you sure she can be trusted?"

"Positive."

Forlay considered for a moment. She hated going back on a decision once it was made, even if her decision was a stupid one, however, if D.M.P. and Rb really could be trusted, it might just be worth it.

"Yo, Bob!" she called to the other officer who was talking with some of the troops. He came over to Forlay and Blaire.

"What is it?"

"D.M.P. and Rb have called a little meeting for us to attend, possible peace talks. The three of us are supposed to go."

"Now?"

"Now. Think we should go through with it?"

"Well . . . I'd much rather talk this through than fight about it, why don't we give it a try."

"All right," Forlay said. "Hey, ~Utahraptor~;)!"

The soldier looked up, "Yes, ma'am?"

"It's General, for one thing. Ma'am is way too . . . I don't know. I'd just prefer general. And for another, Bob, Blaire and I are going to attend a possible peace talk. You're in charge, got it?"

"Yes, ma-General!" ~Utahraptor~;) saluted.

"Good," Forlay said to the soldier. Then to her companions, she said, "Shall we depart?" And without waiting for an answer, she used her V.I.W. powers to transport the trio to the address Blaire had shown her.

They arrived instantaneously at the address. "V.I.W., it's the only way to travel," Bob joked.

Forlay looked around the building they'd landed in. The walls were unpainted cinder block, and there wasn't any furniture in the room. Perhaps Rb had given Blaire the wrong address? Or maybe they'd just ended up in the wrong room. "Rb? D.M.P.?" Forlay called loudly, cringing at the echo the bare walls produced.

"Right here, Forlay," an ominous voice she recognized right away said. Forlay and her companions looked around, but could see no one.

"Don't make me force you to be visible," Forlay threatened. "I declared both of you V.I.W.'s, although it was meant as a lure, I can strip that power from you, as I've shown before. And I'm definitely more powerful than both of you."

The threat got through, for the two girls were suddenly in the room with Bob, Blaire and Forlay.

"Hi," D.M.P. said cheerfully. "Such a small world it is when the leaders of two of the most dangerous armies ever created meet."

"Is this a peace talk or not?" Bob asked.

"Forlay, do you let your subordinates talk for you?" D.M.P. asked mockingly.

"They aren't my subordinates," Forlay said through gritted teeth. "They're trusted friends. Now why were we called here?"

Rb laughed a little. "Trusted friends? Perhaps Bob is, but are you sure you'd include Blaire in that category?"

D.M.P. grinned at Forlay, then said to Rb, "Have fun, unfortunately I have to oversee other matters, and she disappeared.

Forlay's attention didn't waver from Rb, barely noticing D.M.P.'s departure. She had other concerns on her mind. "Of course he's included. And you were once, too, until you chose to throw the respect I had for you away."

Rb walked around so she was standing next to Blaire, an arm draped casually over his shoulder. "I think you should reconsider that classification, Forlay. See, Blaire has led you into a tidy little trap."

center~ ~ ~/center

Blaire turned to her in shock, how could she turn him in? And what trap, it was supposed to be a peaceful solution.

Rb's hand wove tighter around his neck, "Oh, don't look so shocked little AniBlaire, you can't deny this. Don't pretend that I gave this address to you, and you didn't know it was to face your leader's doom. It'll be better this way, you know that. With Queenie gone, up poor humorists won't have to cower in fear, waiting for her to strike."

Bob and Forlay just stared at Blaire, with Rb's pulling him close, a look of horror on their faces.

"You bastard Blaire!" Forlay screamed at him, "I can't believe I trusted you!"

All Blaire could do was mutter, "I . . . I didn't mean, I didn't want anyone to get hurt . . . I just, I just wanted . . . "

His mumbling was stopped when Forlay's visage disappeared and was replaced by a grizzly, plowing right into Blaire and Rb.

Rb snapped her fingers and Forlay was back in her weak model body, arms tied behind her back. Before Forlay could use her powers, Rb snapped her fingers again and two patches appeared in her hands. She pressed roughly against both Bob and Forlay's necks as the patch attached, pumping a diluted dose of anti-fic serum into their bodies.

"Can't have you two using your powers to get out of this. Just wouldn't be right," she said, turning back to a dumbstruck Blaire, pulling himself up off the ground. "Don't look like this is a big surprise Blaire, you'll never get Forlay back into bed now."

At this Blaire's face got immediately angry and he yelled, "I. DID. NOT-"

He was silenced when Rb's hand covered his mouth, "See, this is the kind of reaction we need to see more of. As a matter of fact-" as she waved with her free hand, a gun that looked very much like a townie ray appeared in her hand. "This, my dear friend Blaire, is a modified version of the townie ray. It stimulates the part of your brain you keep hidden, the ying to your yang. With it, I can make you exactly what you like to hide inside that passive-passive personality of yours. I can make it permanent, too. All I have to do is . . . " she aimed the ray straight at Blaire's chest.

"No!" he yelled, as Rb pulled the trigger, and every light in the room exploded, leaving them in darkness.

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay sat in darkness, trying to free her arms without using any special abilities, hoping she could get the ropes undone before Rb could replace the bulbs with a wave of her hands. Hopefully, the shockwave from the blast had knocked her unconscious, and she wouldn't be able to turn on the lights until long after she and Bob were gone.

While she was still struggling, but loosening the ropes, the lights flicked on. Forlay expected to see Rb standing triumphantly in front of her, ready to torment her more before her doom was sealed, and was completely surprised.

Standing in front of her, Blaire stood different than she had ever seen him. He had no false image, he was the him of the real world. He looked different though, having not only dark black hair, but standing wearing designer clothes. Forlay did not notice this though, but the unconscious form of Rb, weapon sitting next to her.

"Thank god! I had thought you betrayed us Blaire! Now we have D.M.P.'s second in command, we're destined to win this war!" Forlay said, looking gratefully at Blaire.

Silently, Blaire walked forward, gazing at Forlay in a way that made her want to shudder.

"Really Angela, we are destined to win this war? And why would you think that?" He placed his hands on her shoulder. His real body was six feet tall, several inches taller than the form she now occupied, so she had to stare up him, now beginning to realize how strange this situation was, finally noticing his change in dress.

"Blaire . . . " She said, whimpering slightly as he gripped the nerve endings in her shoulder harder.

"Tell me why you would win why don't you," He squeeze so hard she cried out, her knees buckling underneath her. Lowering himself to the ground with her, "Are you stronger, are you better?"

"Blaire . . . please, stop!" Forlay gasped, tremors running through her.

"What's wrong, oh great Queen Forlay? Can't take a little pain?" He said evilly, staring at her like she was less than nothing.

Forlay could make no verbal response, so instead, she spit in his face.

Blaire pulled his hand back to punch her in the face, when his world went black.

Bob pulled Forlay up from the ground, still being racked with tremors. He set the board he had hit Blaire with down next to him.

"The ray worked," Bob said, "He's what he feared most," He shook his head, "What are we going to do with him? We can't just leave him."

Forlay got up and picked up the ray beside the unconscious Rb. She examined it for a second, then put it in the pocket of her jacket.

"No Bob, that's exactly what we can do."

Bob looked at her with a shocked expression. "But Angela-"

Forlay glared at him, her eyes like burning embers. "This asshole set us up. I say we set that bomb that Rb's carrying the detonator for, and send them to hell."

Bob looked at her strangely still, and leaned down to pick up the detonator that Rb had hanging limply from her belt. He examined it for a few moments and exclaimed, "Angela! This isn't a anti-fic bomb, it won't send him home, it'll kill him! Without his mind being jacked in here . . . he'll die back home!"

Forlay sighed, no matter how much she wanted this prick to fry, she couldn't let him die IRL, him or Rb. "Grab Blaire, I'll take Rb," she said to Bob, who picked Blaire up and began dragging him out the door. Forlay grabbed Rb, carried her over her shoulder and threw her down on the grass fifty yards away from the small brick building.

Bob reluctantly dropped Blaire next to Rb when Forlay screamed at him about it.

"Now, we have a war to attend to," Forlay said shaking her hair back behind her face and walking off towards camp.

center~ ~ ~/center

As Forlay walked, she mentally cursed out Rb. If it weren't for the damn anti-fic serum, she could have just popped herself and Bob back to camp and started making plans. Now, Rb and D.M.P. would have at least an hour's lead, possibly more if they'd had a back up plan just in case their little "anti-fic" bomb didn't work. Thank God it hadn't.

"There's the camp!" Bob said, relieved, after nearly an hour's hike. Both got their second wind and ran back into camp, both looking like a mess when they arrived.

"Forlay! Bob!" ~Utahraptor~;) called when she saw her commanding officers coming back. "What happened?"

"Call the troops together," Forlay told her. "We have an announcement to make."

"Where's Blaire?"

"That's the announcement."

~Utahraptor~;) wanted to ask more, but thought better of it and ran off to gather the troops.

"What are we going to do without Blaire?" Bob asked as they walked to the commons area where the troops were gathering, and Forlay shifted her persona back to the general.

"Carry on. We'll both have to take on some of Blaire's duties, but we'll be able to cope. We've got a tough group here, we'll carry on."

"And if Blaire comes back . . . ?"

"He shows his face around here again, and he's dead."

center~ ~ ~ /center

Once all her troops were assembled, Forlay pulled over a small crate so she'd be visible to everyone. Her stupid powers still weren't working. If this went on much longer, she'd be in serious trouble. As helpless as it sounded, she couldn't function within FanFiction.Net as well without her powers. It had been so long since she'd been forced to rely upon her own strength she'd nearly forgotten how.

There was a murmur of confusion throughout the ranks as the troops saw their commanding officer resorting to physical means to move things. Forlay called them to attention.

"Yes, I know, I actually moved the crate. Wow, kind of scary, isn't it? But there's a reason for that: I'm sure ~Utahraptor~;) told you Bob, Blaire and I went to a peace talk with D.M.P. and Rb. It didn't happen. It was a trap. Rb took away my V.I.W. powers, and gave both Bob and I a nasty dose of diluted anti-fic serum. Not enough to send us home, but enough to keep us from doing any serious damage for a few hours."

"Where's Blaire?" someone from the back called out.

Forlay sighed. She still couldn't quite believe what had happened. "Blair was a conspirator, a traitor. He willfully led Bob and I into the trap. From now on, it's just Bob and I leading you. If any of you ever see Blair around here, either in his persona or his real life form, as he was when we last saw him, I suggest you warn him that if I catch him, he's dead. And then tell me or Bob immediately. We won't allow traitors in this camp, is that clear?" There was a murmur of yesses. "I said, is that clear?" She snapped.

"Yes, General!" came the sharp reply.

"That's better."

center~ ~ ~ /center

Out in the woods, just outside the factory where Forlay's demise had been planned, Rb stirred back to consciousness.

"Huh?" she said when she realized she was lying on the ground. "What the . . . Forlay."

Beside her, Blair was also waking up. "Shit," he said as he gingerly touched the back of his head. "Ooh, that bitch will pay. Where did they go?"

"Like I should know? I was knocked out after using the ray on you. You were probably knocked out then, too."

Blair shook his head carefully. "No. I was conscious after a moment. I 'conversed' with Forlay a bit, and then . . . nothing."

"Damn. I'm going to go back to camp, D.M.P. is probably back there waiting for my report," she grimaced, "Something I'm not looking forward to giving."

"Oh give me a friggin break," Blaire said in disgust, standing up. "Go give your report and to hell with whatever D.M.P. has to say. What is she going to do,

spank you? Oh, and while your at it, tell her I am heading back to the Queenie's camp. Show her that whatever the hell she thinks she has, she isn't 'destined' to win this war, no matter how many two-by-fours she hits me with."

Rb laughed. "She thinks she's destined to win the war? Wait until D.M.P. hears that! What an ego that girl has! Whatever did you see in her? Or were you just lured by that model's body of hers--"

Blaire shoved Rb up against a tree. Not caring to restrain the hostility he felt whenever someone said he and his little bitch queen were sleeping together. "I will tell you this only one more time, Rb," he told her menacingly, lifting her off her feet, not really caring what reason he had for doing this, but taking immense pleasure in it. "Forlay and I have never, nor do I plan to ever, screw each other. Maybe pussy boy "Aniblaire" would have if he had ever gotten the balls for it, but I have no plans to do Queenie, especially after what she had her lackey do to my head," he grinned evilly, "Though if you want to take that form for ten minutes . . . " he winked at her obscenely.

"In your dreams," Rb said, trying to be nonchalant about it, but there was a slight quaver in her voice. What had Blaire been hiding behind his passiveness all this time? She may have created more of a monster than she could handle, just like D.M.P had warned her. "Now let me down." he did so, and the two uneasy allies parted ways.

center~ ~ ~/center

Bob manned the outermost station in the forest, anti-fic gun at ready to fire on anyone who was stupid enough to try to take his post by force. He didn't like the fighting one bit, but he was good with a gun. After the serum had worn off, he'd linked his mind into the database and learned every useful piece of information in Fanfiction.net's database on guns and rifles. He'd spent half an hour on the firing range, long enough to learn that with his V.I.W. skills he could train himself to be a crack shot in less than an hour.

He had stood there for there for a little more than an hour, and dreaded every minute of it. He had a feeling something bad was going to happen soon, and knew he wouldn't like the consequences of what he might have to do.

There was a rustling in the bushes to his left, and Bob turned. He saw nothing, then felt a sharp pain in the back of his neck as he began to fall. He hit the ground hard, realizing he couldn't move or feel his arms and legs. He was rolled onto his back, and stared up into the face of Blaire.

"Hello Bob," Blaire grinned evilly down at him. "You hit me in the back of the head with a two-by-four, thought I'd do something

similar, your entire body below the neck will be paralyzed for a half hour, so Meeko will have to wait at least that long to torture you back at camp."

Bob's face contorted in a strange expression, not quite fear, but close, "Blaire, get yourself together. I'm your friend, your not like this."

Blaire laughed, "Don't call me Blaire, I'm now Ryan. Your right, Blaire isn't like this, that pissant idiot couldn't force himself to throw a punch if his life depended on it. Then, he wasn't the real owner of this body, just the cheap imitation of me," He raised his booted foot above Bob's face, "That's why I'll enjoy this all the more," The foot came down, and Bob's world went black.

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay paced back and forth outside the door of her tent. Damn. This was not good, not good at all. Bob, who had volunteered to work the out most checkpoint in her line, against her suggestions, was now missing. She had a bad feeling about it, really bad, even before she had been informed Bob hadn't checked in when his shift was over.

center~ ~ ~/center

She knew Blaire would be out for vengeance. He wasn't stupid. He, like most of the writers at Fanfiction.net, had a very high IQ, though he had never put his knowledge to anything except writing fic vids. Now, as a probable megalomaniac, and his knowledge of Forlay's tactics, he would be a ruthless enemy, and completely heartless. If he had Bob, she feared for what he would do to him.

Forlay shuddered when she thought of what she would be like had she been changed. If the two of them got together, she and Blaire would have found a way

to destroy the world and rebuild it in their own image, she was sure. Luckily she had destroyed the ray in the explosion, and hopefully it would never be rebuilt again. Unfortunately, that was still a big maybe.

After an hour of pacing, that seemed to be days, a soldier finally arrived to bring her the news. She was not happy to hear what the fearful private had to say, they had Bob.

centerh3Chapter III/h3/center

Bob awoke to see the bright light shining in his face. At his first attempt to move his arms, he realized his arms were bound by chains. He could barely raise his head, and saw that he was splayed out across a metallic table. "Damn," he swore, this was not looking good. If Ryan had him, he wasn't going to just let him sit. Blaire had once written a story about one of his main characters being tortured for hours, and then months later, had written about Tobias and Rachel being tortured by Visser Three. It was his dark side trying to escape, and now that it had, things were not going to turn out fine, not by a long, long shot.

Bob was startled out of his train of thought by the metal door

creaking open, and in walked Ryan.

center~ ~ ~/center

Ryan had stood outside of the "torture chamber", once a place where a writer could go to relax and write in peace, now it was stripped of all things that made it seem cozy, and had implements of torture covering the walls. He couldn't wait to give pay back to Bob, well, that wasn't actually true. He could care less about being hit in the back of the head, he could care less about the damn war, but it felt so good to see the cries of pain on the faces of his victims.

Before he'd gone after Bob, he'd run into the poem author Meridian. She screamed, tried to call others, but once he had her, she couldn't do anything. He couldn't believe the power he felt as he broke her neck, hearing her pulse stop, her heart on it's final beat. She would die back home, but it didn't bother him, she was inconsequential.

Now, it was time to torture Bob, and that would be immeasurably entertaining. This would hurt Angela, he knew, it would hurt her bad. And that made it all the while more worth it.

Time to get to work!

center~ ~ ~/center

"Now, Mr. Elder," Meeko began as Ryan watched the prep for torture, "This will be unimaginably painful, and you are free to scream as loud as you want, we're all trained professionals, and it won't affect us," she slapped another anti-fic patch on him, "You will be unable to do anything with your powers, but we will heal you before you die, so don't worry about not living long enough to experience true pain. First we will use electrical impulses to just stimulate pain, but as soon as we're sufficiently impressed by your pain levels, we'll get on to the real torture. We have chain saws and-" Meeko was stopped by the annoyance in Ryan's eyes. Even she had respect for a psycho with way too much power, and she didn't want to tempt the one who could easily succeed her leaders, and probably would, in a few weeks.

Ryan stepped forward, coming into Bob's direct sight, holding a small black box with several little indicator lights on it. "Now that you've been prepped, why don't we get on with the torture Bob. Do you have any . . . suggestions?" Ryan said grinning obscenely.

Had Bob's mouth not been dry from a mix of fear and dehydration, he would have spit in Ryan's face. Instead, he said, "Ryan, Blaire, I don't care what kind of . . . asshole, you think you are, but I don't give a shit! You can torture me, and kill me, but your not winning this war, and Angela is going to tear you limb from limb!"

Ryan laughed long and heartily, then immediately stopped, "Oh, can't forget about Queenie, can we?" With a movement of his head, a floating camera hovered into the room, and one side of the room became a blue screen. He spoke, "Forlay, dear Forlay, you out there?"

The blue screen snapped to life. On it it showed a room where Forlay

and several of her lieutenants were sitting around a desk.

"What the hell are you doing with Bob?" Forlay screamed, getting up from her chair, obviously seeing the entire room on whatever screen she had at the headquarters.

"Oh, little Queenie, you care for poor little Bob here," he paused looking fakely dramatic, then his face changed to an evil sneer, "Good, I'm glad. It'll make this all the more enjoyable," he turned around and pressed the red button on his controller pad.

Bob had been relaxed, as relaxed as he could be while strapped down and ready for torture, and then an immense pain, like none he had ever felt shot through him, like a dozen knives ripping through his gullet. He screamed.

Bob screamed and screamed, unable to do anything to avoid the pain coursing through his body, and then Ryan hit the next button.

center~ ~ ~ /center

Back in her make-shift headquarters, Forlay wanted to run and hide. How could she sit and watch one of her best friends being tortured, electrical shocks being sent directly into his brain, and the screaming was horrible. There were no apparent physical damage, but Bob was obviously in extreme pain, and Forlay could do nothing but sit and stare, trying not to cry at the weakness of the situation.

center~ ~ ~ /center

After Ryan had used every one of the four buttons on his control, he decided to see how his "old friend" was doing, before he could torture him and make a real show of it, "So, Bob. Tell me how it feels," he chuckled at this, and so did Meeko. Forlay just stared with her hard, but horrified stare.

Bob was shaking so violently it took him several moments to muster a reply, "Go . . . Go to hell bastard!" He struck out with words, though it didn't even make Ryan flinch.

Ryan stared at him for a second, then laughed loud and haughtily, "I will, and I'll see you and Queenie there with me!"

It took Ryan a minute or two before he could stop chuckling at this to get on to his point. Bob knew he was obviously insane. This side of Blaire was so unstable, so violent, quite contrast to Blaire's quiet pacifism.

Ryan walked towards the camera, completely silent. He then walked back towards Bob. No one, not Meeko, not anyone, knew what was going through his mind until he yelled, "Well, onto act two, twelve knives and a chainsaw!"

Forlay stared at the screen in her headquarters with a mix of shock, horror and disgust. Twelve knives and a chainsaw? She had to do something, and she had to do something fast.

She muted the transmission, not wanting Blaire to hear what she was

saying. She, however, could still understand what was being said over there. And it wasn't good. Meeko, being the torture expert she was, had plenty of knives and chain saws on hand, and Blaire took them from her one by one with a sadistic pleasure.

Forlay turned to her lieutenants. "All right. We can't let that go on. I know this was a strategy meeting, but now it's search and rescue." A scream from the screen behind her punctuated her statement. Forlay flinched, but continued talking. "Does anybody here think they could possibly work with the server, find out where exactly this transmission is coming from?" The officers looked to each other silently, the only sound coming from the screen of horror, no one confident enough in their abilities to volunteer. Finally, Gremlin raised his hand. "I think I can, General."

"Good. Go to work," she ordered. Gremlin nodded then hurried out of the tent headquarters had been set up in. She followed him with her eyes until he ducked into his own tent, then she turned back to the officers in the room with her, each face showing a varying degree of disgust, anger, or both. They all had a clear view of the screen, while Forlay was keeping her back to it so she could better address her troops. She heard the chainsaw power up behind her. "Dismissed," she told them. They all quickly gathered their things and left the tent, relieved. Forlay, however, turned back around to face the screen. She may not be able to save Bob right away, but she felt like less of a coward if she at least watched, knowing exactly what was happening at all times. And it helped fuel her anger. When she got her hands on Blaire . . . God help them all.

center~ ~ ~/center

Ryan pulled the starter on the chainsaw, enjoying the look on Forlay's face as her officers left, leaving her alone to watch Bob's torment. "Typical Forlay," he said, nearly having to shout over the roar of the chainsaw. "Too scared to come help your friend, but too damn stubborn to turn away." Forlay didn't say anything, merely watched with a cold stare as Ryan lifted the chainsaw over Bob's already bloody body. The knives had been fun, but the pain they caused lasted such a relatively short time. Now the chainsaw . . . well, that was a whole other story.

"Enjoy"

center~ ~ ~/center

"Oh . . . God" Forlay stammered, covering her mouth with her hands as Blaire slowly lowered the chainsaw into each of Bob's limbs never quite severing them. Meeko would allow him a minute or so of agony, then quickly heal the wound. Not enough so it was 'all better', but enough so that Bob wouldn't pass out from loss of blood before their torture session was over.

"Blaire, what is it you want?!" She demanded, switching the screen so she could transmit again.

"It's not 'Blaire', Queenie, it's Ryan," Blaire . . . Ryan, replied coldly.

"And my name's Forlay, not Queenie," she reminded him just as coldly. "Now what the hell is it you want?"

Ryan looked down, almost thoughtfully, at Bob, who was writhing in agony. "Hm. Now that you mention it, I don't know."

"Forlay!"

She turned from the screen to look behind her. "What is it, Gremlin? Did you--" Forlay quickly turned off the audio to keep Ryan from hearing her. "Okay. Did you find where his torture chamber is?"

Gremlin nodded grimly. "Remember the Writer's Lounge?"

"Downtown?"

"That's the one."

"He took over the lounge?! That little--" She didn't complete the thought. "All right. Go get the others who were in here earlier. We're going to go on that search and rescue." Gremlin nodded and left. Forlay looked after him for a moment, trying to think of how she could break of the link with Blaire. Ryan. Whatever. How could she loose him without him being suspicious . . . was there even a way?

"Forlay, I'm getting impatient over here. I can't continue without an audience."

Well . . . why not give him what he's always wanted to see?

She turned back to Ryan, tears filling up behind her eyes. "Well, I'm not going to be that audience, Ryan," she said in a choked voice, thankful for her years of acting.

"Aw. Forlay can't take the pain?"

"Ryan. Just . . . go to hell." Without another word, she clicked off her screen, pretty darn proud of that performance. She stood up to leave just as her lieutenants came in. "Come on, we've got a rescue mission to carry out."

centerh3Chapter IV/center/h3

Bob lay in a near unconscious state, only aware of the terrible pain as he was being eviscerated by a chainsaw, after having several parts of his body cut out with knives. The pain was incredible, but he barely registered the screams coming from his hoarse throat any longer.

Since Ryan had started using a chainsaw, Bob had practically been living in hallucinations. He felt himself becoming part of what he had written, the stories, and especially the angst-filled ones, where he felt every death, every pain, inside his being.

center~ ~ ~/center

As Forlay turned off her end of the connection, Ryan smiled. Idiot, Queenie thought he didn't know about the trace. Ryan had Rb on the computers, ready to alert him through his ear piece the moment a trace was initiated. The entire downtown section of Animorphs had

been sealed against author abilities on everyone but those who carried the authorization cards, including him, Meeko, Rb, and D.M.P., who wasn't present in the Animorphs section, but in the hidden headquarters of her army, plotting attack patterns with all those not assigned to "Rb's regiment". None of the soldiers believed that anymore, and Ryan doubted Rb believed it either. He was insane, he knew that, and he was ruthless. This war would be his, and it would not be pretty.

He set down the chainsaw. "Heal him up, and prepare him for the next stage," he said to Meeko, who nodded and signaled for several other author's to help her.

Ryan walked out the door, stretching tired muscles in his form, which he hadn't changed since being finally let to control the body that was rightfully his. He felt extra happy now, Forlay would be his, so he began to hum.

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay and her troops had been marching for nearly a half an hour through the desolate city that had once been inhabited by hundreds of real and artificial beings walking about, enjoying their lives. Now it was barren, apparent that light artillery had been used to gun down the loyalists supporting Forlay's cause, even though they were artificial, Forlay's heart went out to them. They were so simple, they didn't realize their entire world was a simulation, and now, they were dead. It was heartless, very, very cruel.

Soon after she had begun the careful and silent approach to lounge, she realized it was a moot point. She sent soldiers ahead to check it out, and when they returned, she didn't like the sound of it.

When she arrived at the spot the lounge had once been, she couldn't believe her eyes. The building had been nearly completely destroyed by flash bombs. There was nothing left, except one wall. It stood untouched, probably protected by a very powerful V.I.W., Ryan. The wall was bare but for one item. There was a sign, glowing with what looked like radioactivity, with the large words "Angela Dear," waiting with what looked like a palm-print authorization pad. She walked forward, against Utah's insistence that she should stay back.

Pressing her hand against the panel, she felt warmth, and then, the wall collapsed. It was as if the atoms had come apart at the seams, and the wall crumbled and disappeared as the shards hit the ground.

Behind the wall was a horrible sight. Ten feet in the air, mounted on a giant cross, was Bob. He was stapled to the wooden beams by fic chips. One foot long data crystals that were used by all authors to store fic vids. Blood was running down the pole, and Forlay knew he didn't have much longer to live, he'd probably been up for five to ten minutes already, and he wouldn't last much longer.

"Get him down, now!" Forlay yelled at her troops, and they listened, running and beginning to take the pole down enough to get Bob free.

She turned and screamed, "RYAN! YOU BASTARD! YOU ARE GOING TO PAY! DO

YOU HEAR ME! YOU ARE GOING TO PAY!"

This was no longer a matter of right and wrong, it was more than personal, Ryan was going to pay.

centerh3Chapter VI/h3/center

Ryan watched Forlay scream to no-one from the shadows. It was the first time he had taken another form, and it was the form of a pigeon, one of the few animals he hadn't ordered wiped out. It was annoying, but they had marginal vision, so he allowed it.

Taking off with his wings beating quietly, he flew ahead of where Forlay had ordered half a dozen of her troops. He was going to enjoy this.

center~ ~ ~/center

~UtahRaptor~;) led the five other soldiers behind her to the direction Forlay had been pointing. Apparently, she, Blaire and Bob had spent a lot of time talking at the lounge, and now, she was pissed beyond recognition at what he had done to not only the lounge, but crucifying Bob, after torturing him, was a billion miles past the line. She couldn't fail Forlay now, if only because she feared what their general would do if she didn't get to rip Ryan's heart out with her bare hands.

As she waved the others to stop, she craned her neck to hear what she had thought sounded like wings rustling. It was peculiar, there were very few animals left in the city, so she had to be cautious.

"Commander?" one of her subordinates, Brat Girl, asked her with questioning eyes.

Utah was ready to respond, when the clear sound of heavy footfalls could be heard around the corner of the nearest building, in the alleys. "Go!" she yelled quietly to her troops, and they ran to follow the retreating enemy into the alley.

As she turned the corner, she felt every muscle in her body explode in pain.

Collapsing onto the pavement on her knees, barely keeping herself from hitting her forehead on the concrete inches below her face. She saw the rest of her blurry comrades go down with her when they hit the energy field set up on the edge of the alleyway.

Forcing her eyes to focus, she could see the orange energy distortions surround her and her soldiers, and demanded of her straining muscles to move. Crawling three feet, she felt the air around her stop fizzing and realized she was out of the field. For thirty seconds she tried to get her throbbing brain to work, her vision to clear completely, and she struggled to her feet, seeing her unconscious comrades still in the field.

When she stood at full height, she realized, standing just two feet away, relaxing against an alley wall, was Ryan. He was extremely well dressed, not wearing the uniform that he had been wearing while torturing Bob, but far from it. He was in his original form, standing

at six feet, quite a few inches taller than Utah's own height, though that wasn't what was so intimidating about him. Ryan seemed to radiate evil, like it ran from every pore.

Utah raised her anti-fic rifle, aiming it at his heart, but not firing. He couldn't be letting her shoot him. He had something he wanted, and she was afraid of what it was.

"Why don't you shoot me dear? Go ahead, try," Ryan said with an evil leer. Against her better judgment, she fired. The bullet went too fast for her eyes to perceive, but Ryan only raised his hand.

~UtahRaptor~;)')'s jaw nearly dropped. Still standing was Ryan, not sent home, not wounded at all, with a bullet in his open palm.

"Oh, god . . . " she said. Writers weren't supposed to do that, they weren't suppose to be able to move that fast, not even any V.I.W. she'd ever heard of had come close to matching his speed.

"You see, pet, theoretically all strong-minded V.I.W.'s can do what I just did, and this is only the tip of the iceberg. You can do nearly anything you want, be as fast as you want, create any object you want, if only you understand our reality for what it is, not what we perceive.

"I can give Blaire credit for something, he had good taste in movies, and he checked out the area at fanfiction.net. Have you ever been to Matrix City?" Ryan did not give Utah time to respond, she just stood and listened, unable to escape through the energy field, not that she could outrun Ryan at this point.

"It's an interesting community, many strive to learn how to see what this reality really is, and to be able to fully control it, without the pathetic '8-balls'. They are just the first step in linking your mind to the dozens of super-server's that make this reality exist, this reality which can be more real than our actual world. If you can see what the lines of reality actually are, there are no boundaries," Ryan stopped, looking straight at Utah in a far too disturbing way.

She knew what she had to say in this position, and knew she wouldn't like the outcome. In her mind, she silently cursed herself for falling into this trap, "Why are you telling me this? There are minds capable of what you are doing on my side, they could challenge you."

Ryan gave her a slightly frustrated look, "You idiot. You missed my entire point. I want you to learn, to challenge me!" he withdrew a very deadly looking gun from inside his jacket, his voice becoming cold and calculating once again "You'll be more fun target practice."

Ryan raised the gun, "Run, run away little birdie," and she did. Utah took off back from where she came, the energy field disappearing, and ran faster than she ever thought possible. She wanted to scream, to yell for help, but she knew no one would hear her. Unfortunately, it wasn't fast enough.

Utah felt the sting of lead in her lower back, and felt intense pain

exploding through her. She had never thought anything could be so painful, that any human could make a weapon capable of doing that to another being. Ryan walked forward, staring down at her, "What a waste of time, should have caught someone better," and with that, he aimed the gun towards her head, and she felt her world explode.

center~ ~ ~/center

Ryan stared down at the dead body of ~UtahRaptor, and cursed himself for not going after someone faster. He doubted there were many though, and then cursed himself for expecting the enemy to actually be formidable. Only Queenie, she was his only match of skill.

He sighed looking at the dead soldiers laying where the energy field had ended their miserable lives, they were such a waste of space he couldn't believe they called themselves writers.

"Well," Ryan said to himself, "better leave the little note."

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay wanted to scream, or even better, tear the nearest officer's liver out, when she received the news of the dead officers: ~UtahRaptor's group. Now, as she approached the site of the permanently dead soldiers, she did scream. She was surprised when the nearest glass did not shatter.

Reaching down, she picked up the blood soaked piece of paper marked "Angela"

preDear Ole Angie,

Such pathetic excuses for troops, how could you have hired the idiots. Only poor Utah even survived the mind screen. She couldn't run very fast though, I think I hit her in the liver, but you'll have to check for me.

Well, I wanted to warn you, Dumb-as-Mule-Piss is rallying the troops for a surprise attack tomorrow at dawn, I'm telling you this only because I'm tired of having pathetic little enemies like Utah to kill, I need some real soldiers to kill, so be prepared to get your ass kicked,

Warmest Wishes of course,

The true Blaire/pre

Forlay's scream could be heard for miles.

centerh3Chapter IV/center/h3

Forlay and her reduced army made their way back to camp in record time.

Forlay no longer cared about the fact Ryan could get her at any time as they marched through the deserted streets. She was mad, and when she was mad, anyone who crossed her was dead. Even Ryan.

Especially Ryan.

Forlay called the remnants of her lieutenants into 'headquarters' and told those who hadn't gone with her what had happened back at the lounge.

"How did Ryan know you were coming, though?" Gremlin asked. "No one could have traced my trace."

"This is Ryan we're talking about. He can do anything Blaire could, which was quite a bit. Pretty much, if I can do it, Ryan can. He probably had someone checking for traces, knowing me well enough to know that that would be something I'd try to do." She turned to L'Angel, the medical officer. "How's Bob?"

"I think he'll be okay. Major psychological trauma, I'm positive of that, but in a few days . . . physically, he'll be as good as new."

"All right, thanks L'Angel." She turned to the rest of the group,

"Now there's the matter of Ryan's note." She read it aloud.

"Don't trust it," DeathGrip said right away. "Ryan has proved to be nothing more than scum. Hey, he's lower than scum. Scum would be ashamed to be in his company--"

"Get on with it, DG," Forlay interrupted.

"Sorry. What I mean is, we shouldn't trust anything he says. Especially the part about you getting your ass kicked."

Forlay smiled slightly at that. "You've got that right. He's got nothing that could touch me. Just the same, I think we should be on the defensive here. I want guards posted around the perimeter of the camp all night, and everyone is to be awake at dawn with their weapons ready, just in case this is real. Anyone have a problem with that?"

"I don't see why we should trust Ryan," Gremlin mumbled.

"I don't think we can trust him, either. But I'd rather err on the side of caution than end up dead. Ryan isn't like us, using Anti-fic bullets. He shoots to kill. Utah isn't sitting back home, sitting in front of her computer frustrated at her writer's block, she's lying dead on the pavement back in town. And I'm not going to let that happen to another soldier. You all signed up to be here because you think D.M.P. was out of line, the only thing at stake being your writing ability temporarily, not your lives. Half a dozen soldiers are already casualties, and Bob could become one still. That's seven people too many who've had to suffer under Ryan, and I won't have it anymore. Be ready to fight at dawn tomorrow. Is that clear for everyone?" The lieutenants nodded. "Dismissed." She waited a few minutes after everyone had left before leaving herself, for the medical tent.

She stepped into the small murky tent. It'd only been set up when Bob had been brought back to camp, as in this war there weren't supposed to be any casualties requiring medical attention.

Inside, she could dimly make out the figure of Bob on the cot, with L'Angel standing nearby.

"Oh, General, it's you," L'Angel said, "I wasn't expecting anyone, you startled me."

"Sorry, L'Angel," Forlay apologized. "I just wanted to see how Bob was doing."

"I'm fine." Forlay looked down at Bob, who was awake, amazingly.

"Yes, I'm awake. I'll be fine. L'Angel's a good doctor." L'Angel beamed at the praise. "What's up with Ryan?"

"You don't really want to know," Forlay told him.

"Yes, I do. The bastard was torturing me! I want to know what the hell is going on with him now. Did you kill him?"

"He says D.M.P. is going to attack us at dawn tomorrow. And that he's going to kick my ass."

"I wouldn't believe either."

"I'm glad I have your confidence in that, but we're going to be careful about the attack. I've got guards posted around the clock and those of us who can are going to be ready to fight at dawn."

"Wish I could join you."

"You'll be able to soon enough," L'Angel said, interrupting the conversation. She turned to Forlay, "Visiting hours are over, General."

"You're enjoying being the medical officer too much," Forlay joked.

"I bet you only volunteered so that you could override anything I say that involves medicine."

"No, but it was a nice benefit. Now out."

"Yes, ma'am," Forlay said, mocking resignation, but left the tent, going towards her own to plan battle tactics just in case D.M.P. and company showed up at dawn.

center~ ~ ~/center

"D.M.P.'s coming! D.M.P.'s coming!" The cry went through the camp like wild fire. Ryan had been telling the truth: D.M.P. was attacking at dawn.

Forlay rushed to the front lines, wanting to see first hand what was happening before she retreated back to orchestrate the battle. Coming across the open field was D.M.P.'s army, filled with V.I.W.'s and regular writer's alike. From her hurried count, Forlay estimated their troops were about equal. But through the sea of familiar faces, Forlay couldn't find the one she was looking for: Ryan's.

"Let them shoot first," Forlay ordered as she pulled back from the front. "Make them start this war. I'm in no hurry to harm my friends, and we're going to prove to D.M.P. that I am not evil, nor are any of you." Just then, the first shot, fired by D.M.P. whizzed over her head. "That's our cue!" Forlay raised her own gun and fired off several shots as she backed away hurriedly. She would have loved to be in the thick of the fight, but she couldn't afford to be sent home just now. The fun had only just begun.

"L'Angel!" Forlay shouted hours later, stumbling into the medical tent where L'Angel was keeping record of all those who were sent home and for approximately how long. "How many are gone?"

"From our side? Not even a quarter of us, we're doing fine. Not great, but then again, nothing goes great in a war."

"You got that right. Has anyone seen Ryan?"

"No word on him yet."

"Damn. I know that's one thing he wasn't lying about. He's going to come, and he's going to try and kill/torture/maim me, I just know it. If there's any word on him, even a rumor, get it to me ASAP, got it?"

"Got it, General."

"Good." Forlay ran back out of the tent, gun dangling at her side, ready to be pulled out at the first sign of danger.

Which, unfortunately, came too late.

"Oh Queeeeeeeeeenie."

Forlay stopped running, grabbing her gun and glancing around, hoping to catch site of Ryan. "Where are you?"

"Wouldn't you just love to know that."

"Dammit, Ryan, I don't want to, nor do I have the time to, play games with you. There is a war going on, which you just so happened to start!"

"No, that was your queen sized ego working there. I'm just working on ending this."

"Oh stop playing coy with me, Ryan and show yourself so I can kill you where you stand." She suddenly felt the cold chill of a gun barrel against the base of her neck and Ryan's cold, calculating voice saying, "I don't think I'm going to be the one dying today."

"You won't kill me," Forlay said, sounding much more sure of herself than she felt. "I'm the only real soldier you've got. You won't kill your competition so easily. Too boring, too easy for you." She silently prayed she was right, though she didn't mention several other clinical reasons that came to mind, obsession was definitely a big one. There was no need to get herself killed while she still had at least a minuscule chance.

Ryan sighed, "You're right Forlay. I won't kill you." He shoved the gun against her neck, right near the brain stem, resisting the urge to blow off a few toes before the trip. "Yet."

centerh3Chapter V/center/h3

Forlay stepped out of the flash-portal Ryan had created with careful balance, not letting herself fall on her face in front of Ryan. He followed closely behind her, with his gun harshly pressed against her lower back. Wanting very much to either kill her, or . . . kill her. Unfortunately, he had other, very annoying orders from the general.

Ryan grabbed the small 8-ball device at her belt and pushed her down to her knees, her back to him, holding the gun to the back of her head.

"Your going to kill me execution style? How interesting. I thought you only dealt in torture and shooting people in the backs as they run away.

Ryan chuckled a little. "Oh no, Forlay. You're not getting out of this near that easy. Your pain is just beginning. Bob only experienced pain for a short time. He was boring. You, you will be so much more fun."

He backed away and typed a few letters into a keypad on the laptop that was sitting on the only furniture in the room. Immediately, the wall shimmered around them, turning from a polished marble and metal sheen, to what looked like hardwood and . . . a record player. This was more than disturbing, it was. . . strange.

"Stand up. Turn around," Ryan ordered.

Fearing she would be staring into the barrel of a gun, she turned cautiously, to see his outstretched palm holding a small gun toward her. She didn't reach for it immediately, wary of what would happen if she did.

"Take it Angela," He growled. He was losing patience, she could tell, and thought about taking even longer.

"What, so I can have it explode in my face?" Forlay said snidely, still only eyeing the gun. Ryan would not be giving her a live gun if he didn't plan to do something more than cruel.

"Take it now, or I'll hand you over to D.M.P., she'll just have you executed. With me, you can have a chance to prove you can kick my ass. It's up to you. So take the gun, or I call D.M.P. and give her the good news of your capture. Your choice," Ryan said flatly, and began to pull back the gun away from her.

"Give me the damn gun," Forlay spat, grabbing the gun from his retreating palm, aiming it immediately at Ryan, knowing she wouldn't be able to kill him if he didn't want her too, but being as careful as possible.

Ryan studied her stance for a moment, and then raised an amused eyebrow, "So, Queenie, what exactly do you think is going to happen

here?" He asked with a sneer.

"I think your going to make me shoot at you, because you think I can't hit you, then, if you survive my barrage, you'll attack me and kill me. Getting close?" Forlay asked returning his sneer.

He chuckled slightly. "Okay, okay Queenie. Close, but no, I'm not going to kill you. Lets see you try and hit me first before I tell you more, shall we?" and before she could barely think, her finger was pulling the trigger.

Ryan sidestepped the first bullet easily, using speed that any VIW could muster, then it got more tricky. Forlay was good, he knew it, and she knew it. The second bullet missed his leg by practiced millimeters as he jumped into the air, avoiding the third and fourth by a flip backwards onto his hands. Forlay rapidly fired the last two bullets in the weapon, thinking she would definitely hit him in his vulnerable position standing on his hands, when he launched himself into the air, bringing one foot down on Forlay's chest, the other pulling her legs out from under her.

She fell to the ground with a powerful thump, stunned but still conscious, and as he stood silently, believing he had completely defeated her, she brought a sharp kick to his groin, and stood up and carefully edged away as he boiled in anger.

Forlay knew she had disrupted the game plan, he hadn't expected her to do so well in the first place, let alone catch him unawares enough to get that kick in, so she knew he would cause all the more pain in response.

When he pulled himself together, Ryan finally said, "Okay, Angela. You are better than I thought, but that will not have any consequence on what happens next," he said, snapping his fingers, and a small black weapon appeared.

Even though it looked much more deadly than the rays Forlay had seen before, this was obviously the same type of weapon that had made her into a townie, and Blaire evil. She cringed. This couldn't be happening. She couldn't turn evil, not now, not when her friends needed her. And she knew she would be just like Ryan, killing for the sake of killing.

"No," she whispered.

"Yes, Forlay. Though I'll go the vamp route. You can have a choice. I either torture you to death, which you know I am fully capable of doing, or I use this on you. What is your choice?" Ryan asked evilly.

"You bastard, I wouldn't-" She started yelling, but Ryan interrupted, raising the ray.

"Nah, I decided not to give you a choice," and fired. The blue beam hit her straight in the stomach, and it felt like she was being ripped apart at the molecular level. She screamed in pain, again and again, every cell searing. Against her will, she cried for help over and over. She went into convulsions, coughing blood, and then it was over and she blacked out.

center~ ~ ~/center

Ryan walked over to the two girls. One immediately awoke and sent a kick towards his groin. He smiled, deflecting it easily.

"No, no dear. Your on my side now. Stand up," Ryan told the girl wearing the designer clothes and the constant model's body, minus the color changing shoes. She was beautiful, he knew that, but this was business. He could not get involved with this one any more than Queenie herself.

The girl stood, and looked over at her counterpart. Snorting with disgust, immediately saying the first nasty thing that came to her mind, a trait which she was glad to have set free in herself, "I can't believe I was that weak! What have you done, you've set me free somehow?"

Ryan chuckled slightly, "Yes dear, I've set you free. And now you need to be set free from that weakling's name, Angela is not you at all, Angel on the other hand . . . "

She grinned, "I like, I like. Angel, has a nice evil about it. Should we kill her?" She asked, pointing at Forlay sleeping next to her. The girl looked pale, sleeping on the floor, her muscle tonnage decreased, and the angry and pained look on her face gone with the evil side of her personality.

"No, another time. We can send her home now, she has an army to lead after all," he chuckled, and with a snap of his fingers she was back in her tent, ready for the next time they decided to torture her.

"Later we can kill her . . . "

center~ ~ ~/center

Forlay looked up. She was back in her tent. "What in the . . . " she winced. Even the slight sound talking to herself caused her head to pound. She tried to remember what had happened. She'd left the medical tent, wanting to get to the front lines. Ryan had found her, held a gun to her head and . . . then nothing. She wasn't even sure how long she'd been gone, although that was one question she could answer. She looked at the clock she had on her desk, and although it took a second for her eyes to focus on the time piece, she saw that she hadn't been gone all that long. Only 5 minutes. What could Ryan have done to me in such a short time? Ryan wouldn't go for a short job, he'd have tortured her for hours, days maybe. Not just kidnap her, do something quick, and return her with a pounding headache and amnesia. And the nagging feeling that something was missing. Not the answer to her questions, but something from her.

She shrugged it off, she could figure it out later. In the meantime, she needed to find L'Angel, get something for her headache, and hope she could talk to her officers soon about what had happened. Maybe they'd know something.

center~ ~ ~/center

Angel and Ryan watched from the shadows around Forlay's camp as the beloved Queenie stumbled out of her tent towards the medical tent.

"Look at her," Angel jeered. "She can't even walk on her own two feet!"

Ryan laughed with Angel. "She's hopeless without you to make her anything but pathetic. Her 'army' will now be a pushover for D.M.P.'s forces."

Angel sighed. "I really wish we didn't have to let D.M.P. have all the fun with her. I'd much rather kill her myself. Even without me in her, she'd be a decent adversary."

"She probably would be, but . . . maybe we can go 'convince' D.M.P. to let us in on this."

"Let's go then." With a snap of her finger, Angel sent herself and Ryan to D.M.P.'s side to await the general's return from battle.

center~ ~ ~/center

Barely able to keep herself standing, Forlay made it to the medical tent. L'Angel looked up from the paper work she was doing, startled. Everyone was supposed to be out fighting, who would be in here?

"General?" she asked when she saw Forlay standing beside the desk, supporting herself on it. "Anything wrong?"

Forlay nodded slightly, "Ryan," she whispered quietly, not wanting to make too much sound. "He . . . "

"Hold on a sec," L'Angel interrupted. She grabbed the general's arm and led her over to a bed. "You look like you're going to pass out. Now, what about Ryan?"

"I don't know," Forlay said, still whispering. "I left here, he found me and then after that . . . nothing. I found myself back in my tent five minutes later, with a pounding headache and I practically can't walk."

L'Angel grabbed a bottle of aspirin from her desk and handed it to Forlay. "Have some of these, rest awhile. I'll get the others. From what I've heard, the battle's winding down. I think D.M.P.'s consolidating her position, it will be done soon." Forlay nodded slightly and downed two of the aspirin while L'Angel ran off to gather Forlay's other officers.

Half an hour later, with Forlay feeling marginally better, all the officers had gathered in the medical tent, sitting on cots around Forlay.

"I have absolutely no idea what happened," Forlay said when she finished telling what little she knew. She was finally able to speak in a normal voice with her headache gone, for which she was grateful. "But I swear when I find him I'll . . . I'll . . . oh crap."

"What?" DG asked.

"I want to say that I'm going to . . . I don't know. But I can't say

it. I can't say anything violent. I don't feel any hatred towards Ryan."

"That would explain the headache and not being able to walk," Bob said from his bed. "I don't want to say this, Forlay, but I think Ryan may have gotten you with that ray." Forlay took a moment to digest that. "You mean . . . "

"Yeah, there's an evil Forlay running around."

center~ ~ ~/center

D.M.P., resentful from having to leave battle, stormed into her tent, throwing her gun and helmet away from her.

"My, someone's got a temper," a female voice across the tent said. D.M.P. looked up and immediately regretted throwing away her gun.

"What are you doing here?"

"Oh, I don't know," the woman said, walking towards D.M.P. "Maybe I'm . . . letting you know Forlay won't be a problem anymore."

D.M.P. looked the woman up and down. "Don't play games with me. You are Forlay," D.M.P. held herself in a moderately defensive posture, taking no chances.

The woman sighed. "I have a feeling I'll be getting a lot of that. I'm not Queenie, I hate her, she is pathetic, she makes me look . . . like a weakling, and I'm not going to take it. I'm the true Angela, I'm Angel."

"And I should trust you . . . why?" D.M.P. said warily, still eyeing her gun a few feet away from herself.

"Because she's telling the truth." D.M.P. turned around to face Ryan, who now stood behind her. "I shot Queenie with a modified form of the ray Rb got sissy Blaire with. Only instead of getting rid of the barrier that kept the true Angela, or Angel, reined in, there is now an Angel and a severely weakened Forlay over in her camp trying to lead her army. But without Angel here, she'll be hopeless. This war's as good as yours."

"Oh, yes, my hero Ryan saved me from a fate worse than death," Angel said while rolling her eyes. "But he's right. Queen Forlay can't do anything without me. She doesn't have the anger, the hate to propel her into battle. Both of which I have a healthy dose of."

"Yeah, I'd figured that out," D.M.P. said accepting what she saw, but not liking it at all, still more than slightly wary of having one confirmed maniac standing behind her, and another possible one in front of her. "So, how do you think you'll be able to help our cause, For--Angel."

Angel pretended to think about that one for a moment. Truthfully, she had already figured that out. "Forlay's troops, while not being complete idiots, still won't figure out right away that there is now a look-alike of their general. After all, a double of Blaire wasn't created, thank God, so they wouldn't assume I existed. All we have to

do is get Queenie out of her camp, I go in impersonating her, get her battle plans and she falls right into our hands."

"Don't you already know her battle plans?" D.M.P. asked.

"What, you think she actually memorizes them? I doubt she even has them written up yet. She's been a bit busy chasing after Ryan."

"Speaking of her being in our hands, Angel and I have a . . . request for what happens to her," Ryan said.

"A request? You don't make requests, Ryan," D.M.P. pointed out.

Ryan laughed coldly. "All right, we have a demand. The original plan was that you'd be able to take your revenge on her, but neither of us like that much when we think about it."

"You two are not going to get her once we find her. She's mine," D.M.P. said boiling at their traitoress tone of voice.

Angel grabbed D.M.P. from behind, holding a knife to her throat. "I don't think so, D.M.P. See, Forlay was part of me, thus meaning that not only will I know the best ways to kill her, but I should get dibs on her. So she can't handle a joke, there's one isolated incident against you. I've had to be restrained for years, only being released slightly for moments at a time, mostly just in the last couple days thanks to you and Ryan here. Do you know what hell it is living in such a weak idiot's body?"

"No, Angel, you aren't getting Forlay," D.M.P. said firmly. In response, Angel increased the pressure of the knife's blade on the general's throat. "And I'm not caving because of your knife. I'm your superior officer, you won't kill me."

Angel shook her head, chuckling dryly. "And I thought Forlay was conceited. I've declared loyalty to no one. I'm a free agent, fighting with and against whoever I please. Annoy me too much and I bump you off, leaving Forlay's twin to lead your army. Is this a problem for you?"

"Fine. You get a go at her, but I get her first," D.M.P. relented. Angel took the knife away from D.M.P.'s throat and pushed the general away from her.

"Ryan, you mind carrying out your part of the plan now?" Angel asked as she sheathed her knife.

"Not at all," Ryan said, and a moment later he disappeared.

"Remember the deal," Angel warned D.M.P. before snapping herself away.

center~ ~ ~/center

"Forlay, we've got some problems," Andagorilla said as she ran into her friend's tent, forgoing her title.

Not in the mood to argue over the proper address of a commanding officer, Forlay simply said, "What?"

"Ryan's been sighted."

"What?" Forlay repeated, not quite believing the statement.

"Ryan was seen outside of camp, sneaking around. You want to go get him? Or can't . . . I mean, do you want someone else to?"

Forlay shook her head sadly. "No, you do mean what you were starting to say. Or can't I kill him like the rat he is because of what he did. I don't know, AG. But I'm gonna give it a try. I may not have all that anger I used to have, but if he ticks me off enough, I'll still be able to kill him," Forlay stood up from her desk and grabbed her helmet and gun. She nodded good bye to AG and stalked off to the forest, hoping she'd be able to do what needed to be done when she found Ryan.

center~ ~ ~/center

She held the gun by her side like she'd never held it before. It seemed foreign to her, and yet she had a perfect memory of shooting it with a practiced ease not known to many career soldiers. She searched for Ryan in the woods, at least being able to still do that. Her tracking skills had been honed by a link to the server, and a use of her V.I.W. abilities to add to her natural strengths. She could track him, but she had a feeling he was being blatantly obvious. Anyone who had fought in the war had taken the server training on how to cover tracks, it was ordered by both commanders, and yet Ryan looked like he'd never even heard of covering his tracks.

As she saw him ahead, with his back turned, Forlay suddenly wished she'd taken AG up on the offer of company. She wasn't sure she could do this . . .

When she was within twenty feet of him, Forlay raised her rifle, "Turn around, slowly Ryan," she was shaking. Well, she didn't have her anger, but of course she had a larger sense of fear.

Ryan turned around casually, evil grin and all. "Hello Angela, how are you?" Ryan got a strange look on his face. . . concern maybe, though fake, "You don't look good, you out to get some rest and drink lots of fluids," and the concerned look broke into a childish grin.

Forlay didn't waver, "Put your gun on the ground and kick it to me."

Ryan grinned more widely, "Really, and why would I do that?" He didn't make a move towards his gun.

Forlay was near dropping her anti-fic rifle, wishing she had brought a real gun, just in case he had figured out how to stop the effects of the anti-fic material.

The way anti-fic material, be it the metal in the bullets, or the chemical in the patches, worked, was when it hit the form inhabiting the server's realm, and scrambling the signal from the person's brain. The person would be disconnected, and not allowed to come back

to the server for an indeterminate amount of time before the interference on their ID's dissipated. But if Blaire had figured out how to bypass the effects of the anti-fic material... they would all be in trouble.

Forlay knew she would be in the worst hurt of all, because she knew that shooting him with a real gun would be out of the question at her present state of emotion. No matter how much she wanted, or didn't want, to inflict pain on Ryan, she wouldn't be able to kill him back home.

"Do it now, or I'll fill you with bullets!" Forlay yelled, despite the trembling that was trying to take over her body, and the terror that tried to surface in her voice.

Ryan stepped forward, not far, but too close for comfort, "Queenie, dear Queenie. I seriously doubt you are able. How does it feel, by the way? You're trapped in a weaklings body, strength nothing what it used to be. Can you even aim that thing right Queenie?"

As he walked forward, she aimed the rifle more precisely. He stood within two feet of her, and she tried to press the trigger. She couldn't do it, and he pulled the rifle out of her hands.

"Angela, darling. Look at you, you can't even shoot me with a anti-fic rifle? Not that it would do any good, but still, look how pathetic you are," Ryan looked at her like she was a little kindergartner who couldn't seem to color inside the lines.

God, I was right! Forlay realized, he'd figured out a way to block the anti-fic material. They were all in trouble, more trouble than she thought possible, if he gave the secret to D.M.P.'s army. No. She told herself, Ryan won't give up his secrets. He has to hold all cards.

"Ryan, I may not be able to shoot you, but don't tempt me, I swear I'll find a way to kick your ass," Forlay said trying to sound menacing.

"Ooh, I'm scared. I assure you I am," Ryan grinned.

"So, what are you going to do? Threaten to kill me, to destroy my army? What are we waiting for?" Forlay asked flatly. Ryan obviously wasn't here to kill her.

"What, you think you're worth it to me? Pathetic little Angela thinks I led her out here to threaten? You're not even worth it. Don't you realize that everything isn't about you?" Ryan said tauntingly. It immediately snapped in her mind, Her Double!

"Oh, god!" she said beginning to turn and run.

"Run, run little Queenie. You'll be too late!

center~ ~ ~/center

Angel watched from the shadows as Forlay left her tent, heading to the area Ryan was last seen. A moment later, AG left the tent going in the other direction. Angel left her cover then, hoping that no one would notice the sudden change in appearance and clothing 'Forlay'

had undergone. There was no way that she was going to go back to wearing some dingy uniform and a body copied directly from some TV show. She'd stick to her black designer clothes now that she had them. Besides, she'd switched forms so many times as Forlay no one was going to notice. And if they did . . . well, that's what knives and guns were for.

Sneaking into the tent was no problem, everyone was resting after the battle. Finding the battle plans wasn't even that hard, as Forlay had left them laying out on her desk. Angel thought she'd be able to make a clean get away when Bob entered the tent.

"Hi, Bob," Angel said, trying to fake sincerity. "L'Angel released you?"

"Yeah, I'm feeling better. And I was going stir crazy. L'Angel ordered me out of the medical tent so she could get some peace and quiet. I heard a rumor going around that Ryan has been sighted, what are you going to do about it?"

"Kill him," Angel said simply, temporarily forgetting that Forlay probably wouldn't have the drive to do that to anyone.

Bob raised an eyebrow. "Think you'll be able to?"

Angel realized her mistake then. Without her, Forlay wouldn't want to kill anyone. She'd happily go about her life as if she was the lead in a Disney film, meaning murder was out of the question. But maybe they hadn't figured that out yet "Of course I can. Why wouldn't I?"

"Has your memory been weakened too?" Bob asked with concern, "Don't you remember the conversation in the medical tent earlier? There's probably an evil you running around, and if there is, your rage will not be there when you need to do the nasty."

Shit! Angel thought as she tucked the battle plans into the waist of her jeans while letting a knife slip into her hand from it's hiding place in her sleeve. She wouldn't be getting out of this situation without a fight. Fortunately, fighting was what she was good at. "An evil me?" Angel repeated innocently. Then, almost faster than Bob could follow, she kicked his legs out from under him and stood over him with her knife at his jugular. "I don't think I'm all that evil, Bob."

"Would a nice person be standing over me with a knife at my throat?"

Angel looked at her knife. "You don't like my knife?" she asked, sounding hurt. She let the knife drop, but before Bob could relax too much she was holding a gun to his head. "How about this?"

Why me? Bob asked himself. "Where's Forlay?" Angel shrugged, not saying anything. "Okay . . . then who are you?"

"Angel. The true Angela. Now, no more questions from you," she pushed the gun more firmly against Bob's head, tightening her finger around the trigger slightly. "It's been nice knowing you Bob, but I really can't have anyone knowing of my existence. Any last words I can tell Forlay before I kill her?"

"You can't kill her."

"Why not?"

"How do you know you won't die when she does?"

"How do I know I will? It's worth the risk. I'm not going to die anytime soon. You on the other hand"

"Aren't dying anytime soon either."

Angel looked over her shoulder. "You! Didn't Ryan take care of you?"

Forlay marched towards her duplicate. "Obviously, he didn't. Now, I suggest you let my friend go and leave."

"Just leave?" Angel asked mockingly. "You mean big bad Forlay doesn't want to kill someone who was planning on murdering one of her friends?"

"Leave before I change my mind," Forlay threatened.

Angel stood up, holstering her gun and as she did so. Out of her peripheral vision she caught Bob trying to get up, presumably to stop her. She gave him a kick in the side, making him fall to the ground coughing in pain. "Well, I wouldn't want that to happen. I'm suuuure you'd take me down right away after all," She chuckled an evil laugh much like Ryan's, "See you in the battle field." Angel casually walked out of the tent to the woods.

"You sure that was wise?" Bob asked as Forlay helped him up from the ground.

"No," Forlay admitted. "But if she's allied herself with Ryan and D.M.P., she'll get what she deserves. They're all going to screw each other over anyway. At least, I hope."

center~ ~ ~/center

Angel and Ryan met up in the woods outside Forlay's camp. "You get the plans?" Ryan asked.

Angel took out the sheets of paper. "Right here. Although they didn't come easily. Why didn't you capture Forlay when she came out looking for you?"

"I figured it'd be more fun to capture her in battle. A bigger challenge," His expression grew dark at the challenge in her eyes, "You have a problem with that?"

"Since it very nearly cost us dearly, yes, I do," She disregarded the look of rage building on his face, then said, "But I'm up to the challenge of capturing her in battle. Let's get these back to D.M.P. The sooner the battle starts, the better. And no dropping hints this time, all right?" He accepted her statement, and with a click they were on their way to D.M.P.'s headquarters.

centerh3Chapter VI/center/h3

She... didn't hate him. She was... not furious with him. She couldn't hate not hating him!

Forlay felt weak, and empty. The war may have been resting on her shoulders and she couldn't even feel emotion against her enemies. All the while she knew it, though because of her duplicate, she couldn't yell at herself and resolve to find some damn anger somewhere.

If she didn't find a way to bring anger to herself, they would all be in big trouble.

center~ ~ ~/center

He'd been annoyed by Angel's challenge. He thought of her as a prota€šgata€š, sired by himself, but she had been disrespecting him already, hours from being set free. She was beginning to become more of a creature like himself then someone willing to be his unequal partner. Angel was a creature of evil, like himself, and she was not going to stay put. Now that Ryan realized that, the wheels were turning in his mind. He would have to find a way to control her, or kill her.

End
file.